

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns, rendered in a light gray color, framing the central text.

I Can't Believe It's Not Richie

The Greater Fool Series

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I Can't Believe It's Not Richie by mischiefmanager

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Summary:

It seems impossible that a person can be both *that* shitty and *the* shit at the same time but like...it's Richie. And since Richie doesn't give a single fuck about following any kind of rules, Eddie guesses the ones that govern Eddie's emotions don't apply to him either. Greaaaaat.

I Can't Believe It's Not Richie

Sometimes Eddie can't *believe* it's Richie.

Maybe even *most* of the time, like when everything out of his mouth is *your mom* and *my wang* and it's just *words*, it's not even *funny*, and Eddie can only tune him out or try to talk over him. Richie cannot shut the fuck up for one goddamn second. And it's not even like Eddie can pin it to anything specific—like, oh, Richie talks more when he's angry or nervous or excited—because he does it when he's every one of those things and any other thing besides. The tone may change—the subject matter even—but the talking. Never. Stops.

Eddie doesn't really consider himself a beacon of cultural knowledge, but he *does* own a TV. So he at least has a vague idea of what a British person might sound like, which is more than he can say for Richie. Richie also owns a TV, and yet his British Guy impression is so god-awful that Eddie has to assume he's basing it on someone's description of a fever dream they once had about a London street urchin from the eighteen hundreds. This only applies to the actual *words* though, not the pronunciation—which is pretty much indistinguishable from just Richie being Richie—and that's across the board for *all* the voices, not just the British Guy. For someone who loves imitating other people as much as Richie does, it's *unbelievable* how remarkably all his Guys sound like they're from Derry, Maine. Because shouting out mangled phrases he half-remembers from the time he watched *Mary Poppins* six years ago—in the most American voice imaginable—is *still* somehow Richie's interpretation of a British accent.

That isn't even the worst part of The Voices though. The worst part is that Richie seems to have a sixth sense that alerts him to the *exact* moment at which it would *most* infuriate Eddie for him to do one, and invariably it's as if a little light goes off in the least-developed part of his brain that says *Time To Be Italian!* (or Southern, or German—he has a constantly expanding, but not noticeably improving, repertoire) and it's like he just *has* to do it *right* then. Sometimes it makes Eddie want to scream at him. Sometimes Eddie *does* scream at him. But screaming makes no difference; Eddie knows perfectly well

that Richie will absolutely do it again the second the urge strikes him, no matter how inappropriate the timing or what Eddie does in reaction.

He's fucking gross too. Not necessarily grosser than the rest of them, but he certainly subscribes to the teenage boy brand of hygiene that dictates that he only really *has* to shower when Eddie finally shoves him away with a *you smell like a sweaty nutsack*. Of course then Richie inches closer and it's all *how would you know, huh?* and Eddie has to be like *because I have nuts too, dipshit, and if you never wash them you'll*
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And then all his warnings about bacteria and fungal infections are drowned out in the *your mom* and *my wang* and vague, half-heard rumors Richie repeats about people from school that Eddie knows aren't true, and he's pretty sure Richie doesn't even believe himself. Fuck him and his terrible, nasty-ass jokes.

Some days he thinks Richie purposely doesn't shower *specifically* so that he can torment Eddie with his unbearable *boy stank*. Or how he'll like, step in dog shit and just sort of shrug and wipe the sole of his shoe in the grass and then keep going with whatever he was doing like he's not *literally tracking shit everywhere*. If Eddie were to step in dog shit—which he wouldn't because he watches where he's going like a sane person—it would bring his entire day to a screeching halt. He gets that he's in the minority when it comes to these kinds of things, but he doesn't get *why*.

And then Richie has the audacity to suggest that Eddie's just as bad as the rest of them—when he says things like *you're convinced your shit doesn't stink*, or *it's the smell of your own breath wafting back in your face*—like *he* thinks *Eddie* is kind of gross too. Which shouldn't bother him, but it does. Somewhere very, *very* deep down in his gut he has a nagging suspicion as to why that might possibly be, but he's hell-bent on ignoring it at *least* until the inevitable destruction of the planet Earth, if not even longer. And that's going like...pretty well for him. Reasonably well. Maybe a little less well than it used to be, but he's almost fourteen now and he thinks he should probably have a solid handle on the whole thing within the next couple of years.

But even if Richie wasn't either of those things—annoying, disgusting

—there's nothing really exceptional that he *is*. It's not like he's a genius; the gigantic, goofy glasses make him look smarter than he actually is, and he gives as few shits about school as he does about anything else. Eddie is sure that Mrs. Tozier has never been to a parent-teacher conference where she didn't hear the phrase *if he only applied himself*, and he's equally sure that every one of the teachers who said it knew that they were wasting their breath. If Mrs. Tozier—or anyone else—stood even the slightest chance of motivating Richie to care about pre-algebra, there would have been upward mobility in his GPA long before now. Eddie has to assume he does at least *some* homework—if for no other reason than because he hasn't been held back yet—but as far as he can tell, Richie bent over a textbook at home is a sight as yet unwitnessed by mankind.

Richie's not athletic either—by any definition of the word—at least not until they decide to make Competitive Talking an Olympic sport. He's really good on his bike, but that's a skill he developed out of practicality because the alternative is being stuck walking all over Derry, and it's not like being able to ride a bike is something to brag about because even *Eddie* can do that. But Richie's not a fast runner. He can't do a push-up unless it's the kind that only count as push-ups when girls do them, knees on the ground. He can't even throw a spitball into a trash can from three feet away (his performance in the Rock War against Bowers and his goons was a crazy, adrenaline-fueled exception)—and like, okay, the bad aim can probably be chalked up to his horrendous eyesight, but even beyond that there's this general, overall lack of coordination. Eddie has what amounts to a universal pass that effectively excuses him from participating in PE for his entire school career, so he's never been physically *present* for what goes down on the yard, but he can pretty much piece it together from the scrapes and bruises all over Richie's arms and legs. It doesn't matter what unit they're on—dodgeball, baseball, soccer, tetherball—Richie plays only one position: target.

He doesn't fare any better in the kind of extracurriculars that teachers and parents care about, like music. Richie is an *aggressively* bad singer—a fact Eddie is forcibly reminded of every time anyone has a birthday because Richie always makes a point of sandwiching Eddie between himself and someone who won't run away (usually the birthday kid's mom) while he belts out an eardrum-shattering

rendition of *Happy Birthday* at the top of his lungs. Richie seems to interpret birthday party invitations as personal challenges for him to sing *louder* and *worse*, challenges he has so far risen to spectacularly on every occasion. The song gets longer each time too, because he never forgets to include *Frankenstein on channel nine* and *the big fat lady on channel eighty* and whatever new, ruder verses he's scrounged up out of nowhere between the last birthday party and this one. Richie's singing is actually one of *the* most obnoxious things about him, in Eddie's opinion, which is really saying something.

He is so unrestrainedly, deliberately awful that Eddie could honestly imagine some idiot adult who doesn't know Richie listening to him screech the chorus of *Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go* over and over in Eddie's ear (the newest sabotage tactic he's been deploying at the arcade to try to make Eddie lose at *Street Fighter*) and thinking *wow, maybe that kid actually has a beautiful singing voice but doesn't want anyone to know because he's worried people will make fun of him*. They would be wrong, of course, because even when he's not actively trying to suck, Richie can't sing for shit. Eddie doesn't have to know anything about music to be able to tell that Richie's real singing voice—the one he almost never uses—is flat and off-key. And forget about instruments because whenever someone makes the mistake of letting him get his hands on one, he immediately tries to shove it down his pants—or worse, *Eddie's pants*—and pretend it's a wang.

There's art—and Eddie has noticed that being a really good artist can absolve someone of the sin of sucking at everything else. Bill, for example, is talented enough with watercolor pencils that if he drew people's attention to his sketches, he could probably get away with not knowing how to write a half-decent thesis statement or multiply fractions (even though Bill *does* know how to do those things) because people would just affix the *tortured artist* label to him and stop giving him shit about the stutter. And Richie actually draws a lot—probably as much as Bill if it's purely a question of quantity over quality—it's just that the only things he seems to be interested in drawing are dicks, and the places he chooses to draw them are all technically the property of the Derry Public School District. Also, his fine motor skills are at least as bad as his gross ones, because his handwriting looks the way his singing voice sounds, and the dicks he draws make Eddie question if Richie has ever even looked in his own

pants before.

And yet, despite all of the incontrovertible evidence that Richie is actually a walking disaster, there are other times that Eddie can't believe it's *not* Richie to everyone else. Or even like *anyone* else.

It could be argued that it's almost inevitable due to the sheer volume of jokes he tells, but every so often Richie will get one absolutely, unassailably *right*. His timing, his word choice—the heavens open, the planets align, and suddenly everybody around him is laughing so hard they can't breathe, Eddie included. His eyes usually end up watering when it happens, but he squints through them to look at Richie because in those moments, Richie glows like nothing else. He tries to act like it isn't a big deal that everyone is pissing themselves from whateverthefuck he just blurted out of his incessantly flapping mouth hole, but Eddie can tell how thrilled he is when people actually find him funny. It's happening more and more often nowadays, enough so that Eddie sometimes wonders if maybe Richie is wasting his time at school after all. And who needs sports or music or art anyway?

And he *could* be a whole lot worse about Eddie's *germ thing* if he wanted to be, like how some people give him hell about the pills and the inhaler and the hand washing. Richie doesn't have detergent hands but he sure as shit will mouth off to anybody who gives Eddie a hard time about his. He can't say Richie doesn't at least *try* to look out for him, in his own weird way. Or Bill, or Stan, or Mike, or any of them. It causes more trouble than it's worth more often than not, especially because Richie doesn't have any discernable muscle with which to back up his shit-talking, so it probably would honestly be better if he would just like...not. But Eddie can't really help appreciating it all the same.

But the hardest thing to ignore about Richie—and Eddie wouldn't admit this to anyone, even under threat of death by clown—is that his memories of what Richie did for him over the summer have become a kind of personal, private shield against fear. They all try to avoid thinking about It as much as they reasonably can (which isn't much; it's not like you just go and *forget* about the time you and all your friends climbed down a haunted well so you could almost get eaten by a demon clown in the sewers), but Eddie's positive he isn't

the only one who lies awake at night when the sound of his own pounding heartbeat is making him too nauseous to sleep.

The lights are off because it's almost worse when they're on. Maybe if he can't see it coming, it'll just eat him real fast and get it over with before he even knows what hit him. Still, he doesn't want to die—*instantly* is preferable to *slowly*, but even better is *not at all*. So he's developed a set of dozens of little rules for himself to follow—like no turning over, no breathing too deeply, no limbs outside the covers, no long, slow blinks (quick ones are okay; otherwise it's eyes all the way closed or all the way open). Realistically he knows that not a single one of these rules means jack shit to anyone outside his own brain, but somehow *no*-ing himself into what amounts to a vegetative state eventually bores him to sleep. Okay, usually it does. More like occasionally. Actually it's only worked like twice, but whatever. He'll take what he can get at this point.

Sometimes Eddie thinks he has it worse than anyone else. Well, maybe not worse than Bill. But the rest of them—he isn't sure if any of them can really understand exactly *how* fucking useless he felt down in that god-forsaken lair with his arm in a cast. Bill and Beverly were awesome, Mike was like a goddamn soldier, Stan was great after he'd finished crying and even Ben, who Eddie basically thinks of as the most inoffensive kid on the planet, was tough as balls. And Eddie felt like a worthless piece of shit. He hates his arm for being broken, and he hates his nightmares for always including the broken arm. It's coming at him—just him—and his arm is hanging limply and there's not a goddamn thing he can do—

And that's where Richie comes in. Only when he thinks about Richie bitching Bill out for getting them all into this shit situation while inching toward the mountain of broken toys, Richie grabbing a baseball bat and saying *now I'm going to have to kill this fucking clown...* only then does the terror that surrounds him all through the night start to ease up.

And then he thinks a little further back about when he fell through the floor and broke his arm in the first place, about how all his friends were crowding him and freaking the fuck out, and Richie just looked at his arm and said he was going to set the break and snapped his bone back into place while Eddie shrieked at him to *do not fucking*

touch me . Just like, grabbed his arm where it was dangling the wrong way and fucking did it.

Sometimes... Sometimes Eddie is positive that if It were to show up in his house on any given night, Richie would immediately come crashing through his bedroom window, swinging a baseball bat. Because somehow Richie would know if It returned, would know It was coming for Eddie, would show up in time. He'd show up and keep his shit together while Eddie couldn't. He'd probably sometimes miss with the bat, but Eddie kind of suspects that it wouldn't matter. Richie would stand between Eddie and It and just sort of suck all the scary out of the room with his endless, pointless trash-talking. And when Eddie thinks about it that way, it's like you know what? Screw John McClane; Richie Tozier is Eddie's hero.

And then Richie sticks his sweaty armpit in Eddie's face and *goddamn it* Eddie can't *believe* it's Richie.

Author's Note:

Heyyyy so I've seen It three times now and this happened. Let me know what you guys think =)

Also please feel free to come chat with me on my It Tumblr: [yallreddieforthis](https://www.tumblr.com/yallreddieforthis). It's all Reddie and Richie appreciation, and a no-clown zone!